



Skoda Kodiaq Bear Necessities

Review | True off-road vehicles are strong, functional and invincible. Over time off-roaders grew more luxurious and adventure was replaced by mere prestige. That's why they were renamed Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV). Now, Skoda, known for its no-nonsense approach to motoring, introduces its big SUV: the Kodiaq. Is the Kodiaq a real Skoda?

A large SUV is often a dream car. Driving such a huge and often fast car makes the driver feel almighty. Also, a large SUV impresses others, and that can be a tempting feeling as well.

One look at the Kodiaq makes it clear how Skoda distinguishes itself from other large SUVs. The design isn't tough or extravagant, but rather elegant and modest. At the same time, the high bonnet and prominent grille prove the Kodiaq is everything but poor.



Cabin

The cabin looks decent as well, offering everything one comes to expect in this price range while steering clear from abundance. Exactly as it should be with a Skoda! And of course the Kodiaq offers many "simply clever" items that make everyday life with the car more pleasant without increasing the price too much. Examples are a double glove box, an umbrella holder in the front door, door-edge protectors and head rests with a sleeping mode.



The space in the front is huge. Not only the head and legroom is big, the space around the front seats is ample as well. The legroom on the backseat is so impressive that one automatically stretches the legs to relax.

That is: if the back seat is slid all the way to the back. Because the rear seat is mounted on rails, the space on the third row of seats varies from minimal to just sufficient for small adults (whom should be somewhat acrobatic to actually reach the third row).



When the third seating row isn't in use, it can easily be folded flat, after which the Kodiaq offers a maximum of 2,065 litres of luggage space. Skoda states the Kodiaq offers the biggest boot in its class, but because the Kodiaq is between segments (larger than an Audi

Q5 or BMW X3, smaller than a Q7 or X5) that's a matter of opinion.

Infotainment

Under the name "Skoda Connect", Skoda introduces a new generation of infotainment system that offers extra functionality thanks to an Internet connection. However, it all starts with the usual audio, satnav and Bluetooth functions. Optionally, a high-end system from Canton is available, which offers true hi-fi quality with a crisp, clear sound.

Interesting detail: because the Kodiaq is so spacious, a gadget is available to amplify the voices of the driver and co-driver so they can be heard more clearly all the way in the back.



For integration with smartphones, Skoda supports Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and the now obsolete MirrorLink. Even without a smartphone the Kodiaq can connect to the Internet by itself and fetch the latest fuel prices, traffic information, news and weather forecasts. Also, satellite images from Google Earth can be projected over the map from the satnav to make navigating even easier.

Petrol

For now, the Kodiaq is available with a choice of five different engines: two diesel and three petrol engines. The base petrol engine has a disposition of only 1.4 litres and with a car this big that's a daring choice. However, during the test drive it turned out the output of 150 PS / 250 Nm perfectly fits the character of the car: more than enough, but no abundance.



The driver never has the feeling of driving a base model; however, sometimes (for example during acceleration at high speeds) the 1.4 TSI has to work a bit harder than the average engine. On a varied route with open roads and city traffic, the Kodiaq 1.4 TSI

used as little as 6.7 litres per 100 km (42 mpg).

The 2.0 TSI develops 180 PS / 320 Nm, but while actually driving it the difference with the 1.4 TSI is disappointingly small. The strongest engine has a bigger bite at high speeds and packs a bit more punch, but the differences are small. Because the smaller engine revs more easily, it actually feels more lively.



The test drive with the 2.0 TSI with an automatic gearbox and four-wheel drive cost 7.6 litres per 100 km (37 mpg).

Diesel

The 2.0 litre diesel is likely to become the most sold version. Compared to the petrol engine it lacks refinement, which means it is clearly audible. The difference with so-called "premium" brands is obvious, but so is the price difference.

With the 150 PS strong diesel engine (there's also a 190 PS version) the same route was travelled as with the petrol engines. This time it took 5.7 litres per 100 km (50 mpg).



Handling

The Kodiaq is available with standard suspension and adaptive suspension. With the basic suspension the Kodiaq once again feels very different from its more expensive rivals. While premium models have a grand feeling, the Kodiaq is merely big. And while other large SUVs respond with a certain grandeur to the driver's input, the Kodiaq handles like a smaller SUV.

Handling also differs from Skoda's other large car: the Superb. Those who think the underpinning of the Superb is too soft and steering is too indirect, will feel more at home in the Kodiaq.



With the adaptive suspension, handling in neutral mode is roughly the same as with the base suspension. In comfort mode the Kodiaq becomes more sluggish, while sports mode makes the car noticeably more sharp and dynamic.

Off-road

Optionally, the Kodiaq can be fitted with four-wheel drive. But because it is mainly meant as a spacious and functional car, four-wheel drive doesn't turn the Kodiaq into a true off-roader. That's why there are no off-road aids like diff locks or low gearing.

However, Skoda does supply some elementary electronic aids to make off-roading more safe. Both the suspension, the response of the throttle and the anti-block brakes have an off-road mode. "Hill Descent Assist" makes it easier to descend from steep slopes without running the risk of blocking one wheel which would render the car uncontrollable.



Finally, the name. The Kodiak (with a "k" at the end) is a bear that dominates Kodiak island on Alaska. With the Kodiaq, Skoda wants to do the same in the large SUV segment. Also, it gives this no-nonsense car an adventurous touch.

Conclusion

Skoda first did it with the Superb and now repeats the same trick with the Kodiaq. In the higher segment of the market Skoda doesn't introduce the next prestigious car, but instead it offers a very functional vehicle.

Still, Skoda offers everything one requires, but no more than that. The engines perform adequately and focus on fuel economy rather than powerplay. The design is smart and functional rather than

extravagant. The almighty feeling that characterises other big SUVs is lacking, but handling is in fact just sufficient. Offering only the "bear" necessities makes the Kodiaq a true Skoda! ■



Specifications

Skoda Kodiaq 2.0 TDI Edition DSG

Size and weight



Length x width x height	470 x 188 x 166 cm
Wheelbase	279 cm
weight	1.692 kg
Trailer	750 kg
Trailer - braked	2.000 kg
Fuel capacity	58 l
Luggage space	720/2065 l
Tyre size	R18

Engine and performance



Capacity	1968 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/
Max power	150 PS @ 3500 rpm
Max torque	340 Nm @ 1750 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	10.1 secs
topspeed	199 km/h
Average mileage	5 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	5.8 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	4.6 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	131 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 32,715
Price base model	Â£ 21,765